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Lawmakers Dodge U.S. Sovereignty Question During House Hearing on WHO Reform

A hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives' Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic Wednesday focused on if and how to reform the World Health Organization, but experts told The Defender the hearing lacked substance and sidestepped important issues.

By **Michael Nevradakis, Ph.D.**

19

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A hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic Wednesday focused on the World Health Organization (WHO): Should it be reformed and, if so, how?

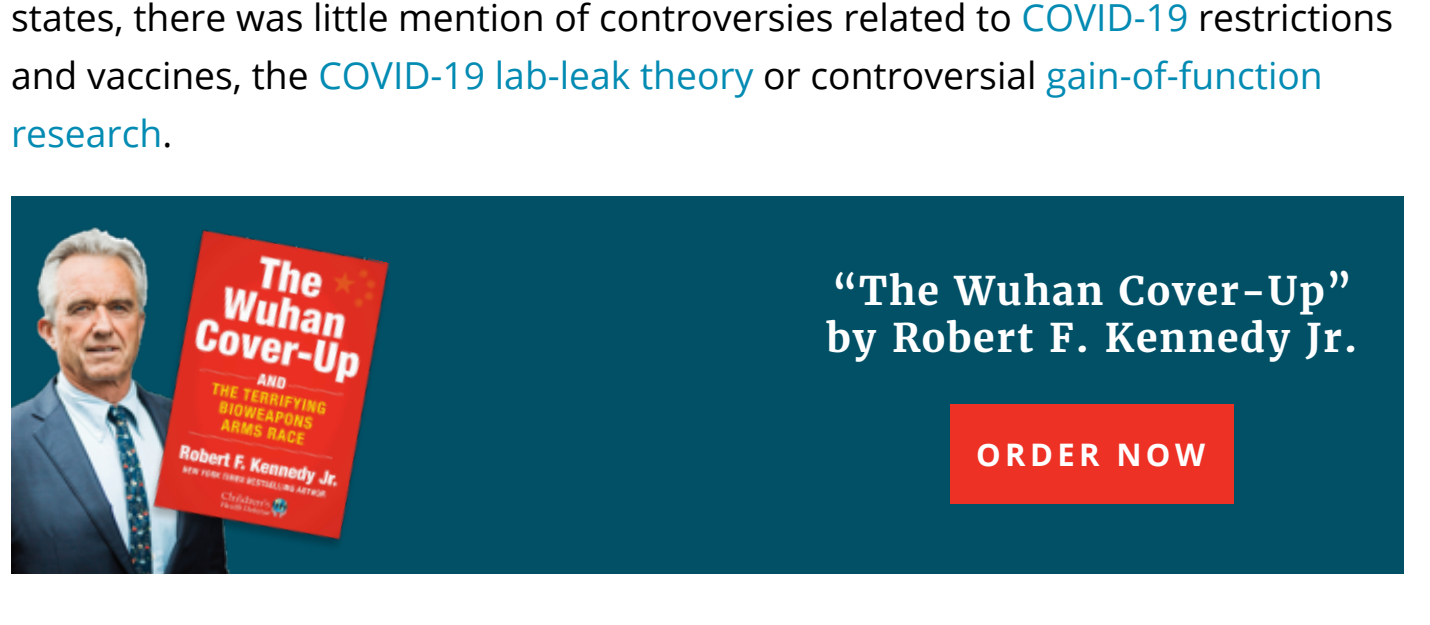
However, experts who spoke with The Defender said the hearing, originally scheduled for October but postponed until this week, lacked substance and sidestepped important issues.

Three witnesses testified: Loyce Pace, MPH, assistant secretary for global affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), John Nkengasong, Ph.D., ambassador-at-large, U.S. global AIDS coordinator and senior bureau official for global health security and diplomacy at the U.S. Department of State and Atul Gawande, MD, MPH, assistant administrator for global health at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Statements by lawmakers and witnesses centered around China's level of cooperation with the WHO, the importance of asserting U.S. leadership over the WHO and U.S. interests related to the proposed amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) and the "WHO Pandemic Agreement," both currently under negotiation.

Lawmakers also discussed the importance of the WHO in helping nations prepare for the "next pandemic," and the broader role of the U.S. in the global public health infrastructure.

While there was some discussion of preserving U.S. sovereignty if the IHR amendments and/or Pandemic Agreement are approved by the WHO's member states, there was little mention of controversies related to COVID-19 restrictions and vaccines, the COVID-19 lab-leak theory or controversial gain-of-function research.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Dr. Meryl Nass, an internist, biological warfare epidemiologist and member of the Children's Health Defense scientific advisory committee, live-blogged the hearing for CHD.TV. She also shared critical remarks about the proceedings with The Defender.

"The witnesses, all government officials working and negotiating with the WHO, were selected to toe the party line," she said. "Nothing new was allowed out of their mouths."

Valerie Borek, associate director and lead policy analyst for Stand for Health Freedom, said she "was not impressed by the hearing."

"The issue of whether the treaty and IHR amendments would threaten American sovereignty was brought up, but dismissive answers denying it did not get follow-up," she said. "The hearing was titled 'Reforming the WHO,' but there was very little talk of what that meant."

Nass said there was "much dissembling about the issue of whether U.S. agreement [to the IHR amendments and/or Pandemic Agreement] would transfer sovereignty, but the witnesses lied and said it would do no such thing," Nass said. "The answers were a mishmash of talking points and meaningless blather — running out the clock."

"The witnesses brazenly lied under oath," Nass added. "Brazenness seems to be a feature of the pandemic age."

Witnesses sidestepped lab leak questions

Much of the testimony — and a substantial portion of the opening remarks of Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio), chair of the subcommittee — centered around China's level of cooperation with the WHO and its role in a "cover-up" of the early danger and spread of COVID-19.

"When the WHO should have been conducting independent investigations into the origins of COVID-19 and presenting the global community with verified information to help keep them safe, we instead saw that they ignored some facts and parroted back statements that came from the Chinese Communist Party," Wenstrup said.

"The WHO's lack of independent investigation potentially allowed the beginning of the pandemic to be worse and spread further. … All in all, we saw the WHO more influenced by politics than public health."

Some of the witnesses and several of the lawmakers on the subcommittee credited the WHO's role in protecting global public health.

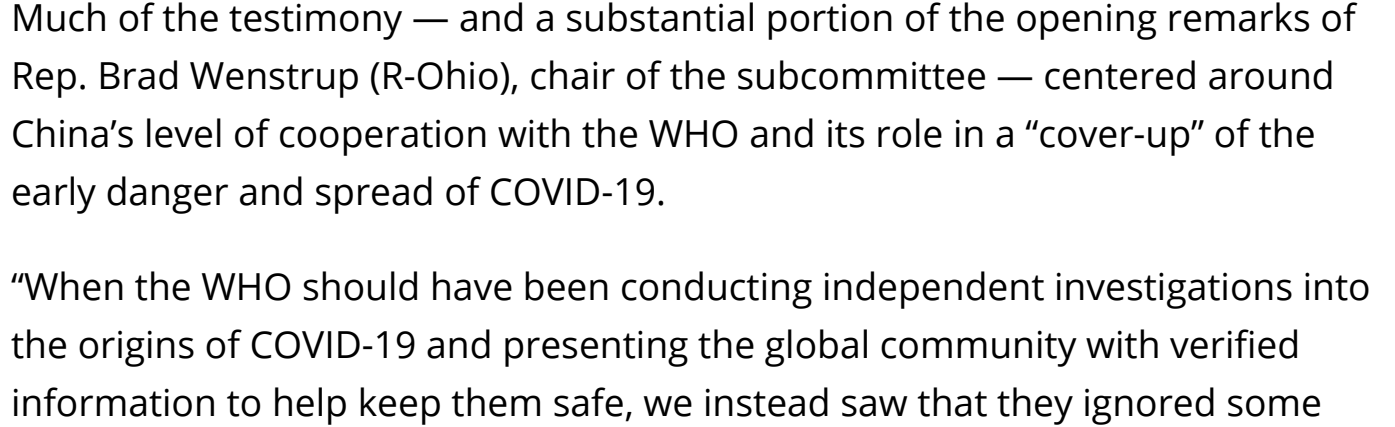
"There is no international organization as central to this work as the World Health Organization, which has contributed to monumental advancements in healthcare access, improvements in population health outcomes, and the defeat of deadly diseases," said Raul Ruiz (D-Calif.), ranking member of the subcommittee.

The witnesses conceded difficulties cooperating with the Chinese government during the COVID-19 pandemic. "China has not been forthcoming the way it should be in working with WHO," Nkengasong said.

Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-Md.) said WHO officials should be questioned about the difficulties working with the Chinese government.

However, when Wenstrup asked the three witnesses to respond to a question about Dr. Peter Daszak of the EcoHealth Alliance and his role in research conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology — the source of the alleged lab leak — they sidestepped the question.

"The WHO whitewashed the origin question," Nass said. "This panel has shone a light on absolutely nothing so far, as anticipated."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Lawmakers, witnesses claim 'next pandemic' coming

Lawmakers and witnesses appeared to agree on the need to be prepared for a future pandemic.

"We must be better prepared when the next pandemic surfaces and a scientifically focused WHO is paramount to that," Wenstrup said. "Nothing is more important than global public health and properly reforming the WHO is the first step to that protection."

Along similar lines, Ruiz said, "I want to take the time to emphasize now that our work to prevent and prepare for future pandemics is not in conflict with enhancing international cooperation. Instead, our efforts are strengthened and fortified by it."

"In order for us to ensure our nation is truly prepared for the next pandemic, we must continue to engage with the international community on work that prevents future threats from reaching our nation," he added.

Suggesting there's "no ocean large enough to protect Americans from a virus that can spread rapidly across the globe," Pace claimed, "It's only a matter of time before the world faces another serious public health threat."

WHO only interested in 'power grab'

Lawmakers and witnesses also didn't question the need for amendments to the IHR (2005) or for a Pandemic Agreement, but instead focused their attention on the issue of protecting U.S. sovereignty and American interests in the event the WHO's member states approve either or both of these instruments.

Wenstrup said the Pandemic Agreement and IHR amendments "must ensure American interests are protected. They must not violate international sovereignty and they must hold China and others accountable. Further, any accord or treaty must be presented to Congress for approval," he said.

Ruiz chimed in with,"The United States has served as the preeminent leader in global health for decades and now is not the time to cede that role to another country angling for global influence. Now is the time to reinforce the United States' global health leadership with meaningful reforms to the WHO that promote transparency and strengthen international cooperation in the event of future pandemics."

Pace highlighted the role the U.S. played in proposing some of the IHR amendments.

"It's quite important for us to ensure that in these deliberations … evolve in a way that serves all countries and … ensures our highest and best level of prevention, preparedness and response," Pace said. "It's one of the reasons that the U.S. actually took a leadership role in calling for the revisions of the International Health Regulations and introduced the original 13 or handful of amendments."

According to Gawande, "The additional reforms the U.S. is advocating for under reforming the international health regulations make a clearer tiered response." At present, the USAID official said, the WHO can declare only a "public health emergency of international concern" as it did in the case of COVID-19.

"We're looking for a three-level set of tiers, so that there is an earlier indication that countries have a health issue developing of concern," Gawande said.

In her live blog, Nass remarked that this proposal is not evident in copies of the proposed amendments that have been made public.

"Gawande misrepresents the IHR amendments and says they seek a tiered response," Nass wrote. "It seems he has seen a later version than was made public."

Pace said her agency "work[s] closely with our colleagues at the Department of State and USAID, as well as other federal agencies, to build pandemic prevention, preparedness and response capacities worldwide."

"HHS is leading efforts to update the International Health Regulations to make them clearer, more precise and better fit for purpose," Pace said. "We're advocating for amendments that would ensure rapid and transparent information sharing, enhance WHO's ability to assess health threats and improve global implementation and compliance," she said.

Pace "asserts that reform is the reason the U.S. led the way in proposing changes to the IHR," Borek said. "That assertion conflates expansion of scope and authority with reform. It's like saying, 'you messed up, here's more responsibility,'" she added. "The only 'reform' [the WHO is] interested in is the type Pace is spearheading — a power grab."

Pace argued that medical innovations did not reach the U.S. in a timely manner during the pandemic and that the IHR amendments would alleviate this issue.

"One of the shortcomings unfortunately of the COVID-19 pandemic is it did not allow for a high degree of accountability when it came to accessing innovations in particular," she said. "One of the things we are trying to negotiate as part of this agreement is to ensure that those innovations reach everyone, including Americans, on time."

Yet, on her blog, Nass said Pace's agency "suppressed existing drugs to make way for innovative vaccines that turned out to harm Americans. Innovation during a pandemic is not necessarily a good thing."

Regarding ongoing negotiations for the Pandemic Agreement, Nkengasong said the State Department is working with HHS "to support our negotiating team in Geneva," adding that "it's very clear … that we need this instrument … that would protect us," as the world finds itself "in an era of pandemics."

"It is an accord that will do the things that we have been discussing here, which is allow us to dictate early, respond early, [to] a threat that will emerge and invariably will emerge because we all know that we live in an era of pandemics," he said.

"Ultimately, we're focused on finding sustainable solutions that break the cycle of pandemic crisis and complacency," Pace said.

Many analysts have argued that the proposed IHR amendments and Pandemic Agreement also pose a threat to the sovereignty of the U.S. and other countries. These claims were addressed during the hearing by lawmakers and witnesses alike.

"We don't want respect for our sovereignty. We demand to be respected," said Rep. Marianette Miller-Meeks (R-Iowa). "We demand it especially from members who are not acting in good faith. And if we cannot be assured of our sovereignty, it is up to members of Congress to … have congressional approval so that our sovereignty is respected."

Borek said the IHR amendments need to be treated as a treaty. "There are over 300 amendments proposed that affect more than 50% of the [IHR (2005)] document. Further, the whole point of the process right now is to turn 'non-binding' options into obligations."

She added:

> "The amendments could change the fundamental nature of the document, the relationship of the U.S. to other nations, dictate domestic spending and policy making, and potentially conflict with state police powers. These amendments must be seen by Congress before the U.S. goes anywhere near adopting them."

Addressing calls for the U.S. to exit the WHO, Meeks said U.S. sovereignty is better protected by remaining in the organization.

"As the WHO seeks to alter international health regulations, it's vital the United States and other member countries not let bad actors hijack the review process," she said.

"We want respect for our sovereignty, and so we also limit how much WHO can control or demand things of us, and that is one of the challenges here, that we are protective of our own sovereignty and therefore do not want to have those tools challenge potentially challenge us or other member states," Gawande said about the proposed instruments.

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Nkengasong said the issue of sovereignty "has not at all been a subject of discussion during the [negotiations for] the Pandemic Agreement … We will not allow such, if ever such a discussion was to occur during the negotiation."

"It takes an effective WHO to adequately guard global health and well-being supporting the safety and sovereignty of America," said Pace. "Frankly, if [the] WHO didn't exist, we would have to create it."

Nass, in her live blog, disputed those claims, writing that those claiming U.S. sovereignty is not threatened "either [have] not read the documents" or are "lying."

In her live blog, Nass noted that Wenstrup briefly addressed the difference between an "accord" or a "treaty" but "did not say how, nor insist on the need to review the treaty. This seems like an attempt to give up Congressional review of the amendments."

For Ruiz though, the proposed "reforms" take "a lessons-learned approach from the early days of the pandemic," which would "enhance oversight of member states' compliance" with the IHR, "develop an early warning system for public health threats," and "strengthen investigative capabilities " for public health emergencies.

According to several of the lawmakers and witnesses, this is to best prepare the U.S. for a future pandemic, with Nkengasong saying, "It is not a question of if a new health threat will emerge. It's a matter of when. The world needs greater cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and communication."

This could be achieved, witnesses said, by the U.S. remaining a member of the WHO.

"One of the reasons we want to remain at the table [is] to be a voice in that room and ensure that that voice is rooted in science and in the important work of WHO, really serving not only America but the world in ways that we want to see," Pace said.

"We know that when we are not at the table, others will take our seat at the table," Nkengasong said. "Now the burden is on all of us, the burden of leadership to continue to put pressure on WHO to reform so that it can be more agile, it can be more forceful and it can be more accountable in responding to or putting pressure where it's needed."

'There is no way the WHO can be reformed'

According to Nkengasong, if the U.S. remains in the WHO, it can "help elevate global health security as part of our foreign policy."

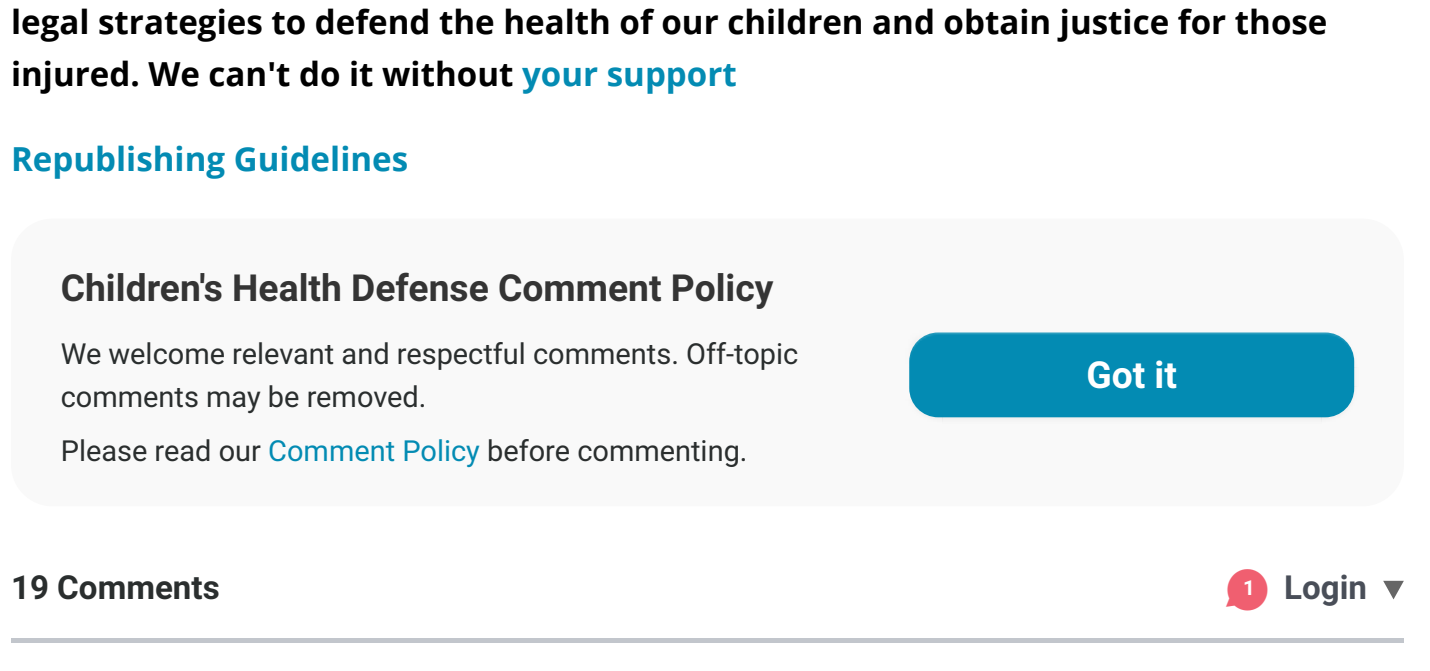
Gawande added, "In a crisis, U.S. leadership is indispensable. A case in point is the U.S. providing more COVID vaccines without charge than any country in the world … We also supported COVAX as a mechanism that then got other countries to do their share," Gawande said, adding that the U.S. and COVAX "donated close to 7 million safe and effective vaccines to over 117 countries."

"He claims the vaccines provided by COVAX were safe and effective for COVID," Nass wrote, referring to Gawande's statement. "Please remind him he is under oath."

Nass told The Defender her impression was that the hearing "was conducted in order to say an oversight hearing was conducted on the WHO, when there was no oversight happening, just a lot of grandstanding. "Both members and witnesses should be ashamed of their performance, and I invite their constituents to challenge them on it," she said.

"One wonders if turning over your country's sovereignty to an unaccountable agency run by globalist pawns for its funders is an act of treason, and if so, whether U.S. government employees could be called to account in future," Nass added.

Watch the hearing here:



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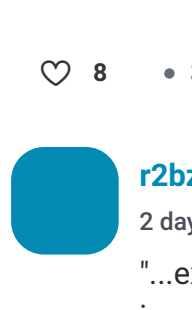

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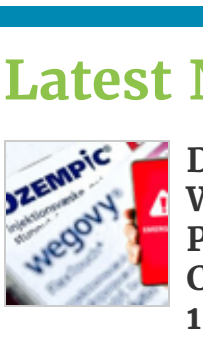
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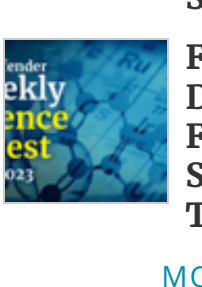
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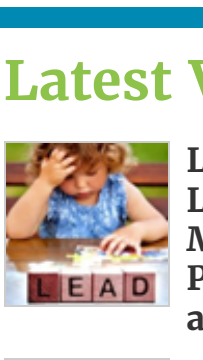
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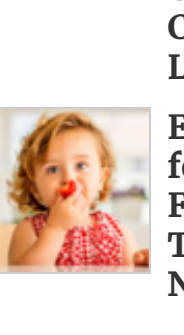
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r2bzjudge
2 days ago
"...experts told The Defender the hearing lacked substance and sidestepped important issues."

In other words, it was a sham hearing, just like the ones used by state medical license boards to punish doctors who don't parrot the official lies about the Covid shots.
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GarySummers → r2bzjudge
a day ago
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A stunning Japanese study that has evolved from preprint to peer-reviewed publication suggests that all COVID-19 variants were "engineered in biolabs and intentionally released upon humanity". First released in August 2023, the study, conducted by renowned Japanese virologists Professors Atsushi Tanaka and Takayuki Miyazawa of Osaka Medical University and Kyoto University, affirms that the push to keep COVID around is part of a nefarious deep state scheme to remove our individual freedoms and control us. US Bio-Labs in Ukraine? CCP Labs? Fort Detrick? NCU Chapel Hill?
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Michael Morningstar
2 days ago
Thank you for reporting on this serious subject that should be of great concern to every US and global citizen. Stop the WHO before they Stop & Shot You.
16 0 Reply • Share ›

Jerry Alatalo
2 days ago
Perhaps Pfizer, Moderna and the other mRNA injection manufacturers will come up with a "safe and effective" mRNA bioweapon shot to prevent politicians' blindness when a Nazi 4th Reich global dictatorship scheme is right in front of their eyes...
13 0 Reply • Share ›

MultiChubby1 → Jerry Alatalo
2 days ago
Trump was in the process of making the Zelenko protocol and HQ et al the official recommendation. Suddenly he signed warp speed. He's has lost trust and until he comes clean he will not attain that position again.
1 3 Reply • Share ›

GarySummers → MultiChubby1
2 days ago edited
He did not Mandate the Jabs, he advocated for early Treatments, Ivermectin, Hydroxy. The Globalist Media supported Fauci, and Birx, remember?

He was given corrupt bad advice from Fauci, Birx, and VP Pence, who was in Charge of the US Covid Response. Pence is good Friends of the Bush's, which we know are Globalist.

Fauci used Covid as a big $$$ for Big Pharma, DOD/CIA, and other Friends. IMO.
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brbg → GarySummers
an hour ago
Fauci himself is part owner of the COVID vax patent.
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Voyt Regnal
2 days ago
Nations must get out of out of WHO, UN and NATO and stop funding. WHO is menace, UN totally ineffective, NATO is war machine drugging Europe into it.
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2 days ago
Trump took us out of the Gates/Globalist, CCP WHO. Biden put us back in, one of his first decisions.
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ogam5
2 days ago
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" UN AGENDA 21: The socialist plan to use coronavirus pandemic for GLOBAL CONTROL"
The USA need to get out of ALL of them!
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UN AGENDA #21:
Nuclear family values will be undermined to break up American families. More prisons will be built while schools will be closed. The middle class will disappear while manufacturing businesses either leave the United States or go out of business. Corporate bailouts along with huge law settlements from what will appear as corruption on Wall Street and corruption in major banks will all divert billions and billions of dollars into the pockets of a handful of the richest people on earth. Americans will not own their own homes or properties, millions upon millions of foreclosures that will create a huge population of homeless people in America...
see more
7 0 Reply • Share ›

Jean
2 days ago
There is absolutely NOTHING to negotiate. The WHO cannot be given control over the world. Hopefully, President Trump will get us out of there again once he's back in the WH.
9 0 Reply • Share ›

Rose White → Jean
2 days ago
I agree 100%!! It's a global power grab!! United States must "REJECT" any involvement with the WHO & the others who will remove our sovereignty!
4 0 Reply • Share ›

GarySummers → Rose White
2 days ago
All part of the UN Agenda #21, they have been working on this since Pres. Ford Days.
2 0 Reply • Share ›

MultiChubby1
2 days ago
"It's only a matter of time before the world faces another serious public health threat."
4 0 Reply • Share ›

tony ↪ MultiChubby1

a day ago

It may very well come as a multi-event occurrence: A) Plandemic B) Cyber Attack or EMP C) War at home or abroad. Klaus has mentioned this before. We should listen when they broadcast their intentions.

2 0 Reply • Share ›

Donna Sheehan

a day ago

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